



Office of the City Manager
November 25, 2003

Mr. Darroll Hargraves
Chair
Local Boundary Commission
550 W. 7th Avenue, Suite 1770
Anchorage, Alaska 99501-3510
Fax (907) 269-4539

Mr. Roger Sampson
Commissioner
Department of Education & Early Development
801 W. 10th Street, Suite 200
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1894
Fax: (907) 465-4156

Dear Mr. Hargraves and Sampson:

The City of Valdez has followed the issue of school district consolidations and its impact on the formation of boroughs. The City of Valdez is a home rule municipality that contributes over 50% of the funds necessary for operating the local school district. The district has nearly 870 enrolled students.

Recently, the City of Valdez passed Resolution 03-90, formally supporting Senate Concurrent Resolution 12, sponsored by Senator Wilkin, which called for the formation of boroughs in four regions of the state for the expressed purpose of having local residents contribute to local education where they can. A copy of Resolution 03-90 is enclosed for reference. The City has long supported the formation of boroughs in areas of the State where they can financially contribute to local school districts.

Although the City of Valdez is located in the unorganized borough, Valdez does contribute over 50% of the cost for local education and is relatively isolated which does not lend itself readily to combining Valdez with other jurisdictions in order to achieve economies of scale by combining school districts. In combining school districts for efficiencies one needs to look at the distances separating the current districts and the modes of the transportation between these locations.

The statement of legislative intent regarding SCR 12 outlines the primary purpose of school consolidation as "...providing effective and results-based intervention strategies to improve performance that will assist students to raise their achievement levels and meet high academic standards, especially in the core areas of reading, writing, and mathematics..." While the City understands and supports the desire of the state to have local communities and areas financial support education in their areas toward this goal, the City will not support efforts to combine the Valdez School District with other schools districts. The combination of Valdez with another district would only dilute the already declining tax revenue needed for local education. The end result for Valdez would mean a reduction in academic standards.

Thank you for your consideration of the City's comments.

Sincerely,

David Dengel
David Dengel
City Manager

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CITY OF VALDEZ, ALASKA**RESOLUTION 03-90****A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF VALDEZ ALASKA SUPPORTING SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 12 AND RECOMMENDING PASSAGE OF SCR 12**

WHEREAS, a significant portion of Alaskans reside within unincorporated areas, within the unorganized borough; and

WHEREAS, these areas of the state do not financially support their local public school systems; and

WHEREAS, residents living in organized boroughs, and home rule or first class cities within the unorganized borough are required to operate and fund their public school systems; and

WHEREAS, Senate Concurrent Resolution 12 acknowledges the natural unfairness in our current local government structure and offers a possible solution; and

WHEREAS, the Local Boundary Commission determined in its February 2003 report *Unorganized Areas of Alaska that Meet Borough Incorporation Standards*, that seven unorganized areas meet current standards for borough incorporation, including the necessary fiscal and administrative capacity to conduct borough functions; and

WHEREAS, while three of the model boroughs have cities that contribute at or above the required school match funding, four of these seven areas have a significant number of residents who are not required by the state to help operate or support their local schools; and

WHEREAS, all areas of Alaska should be required to contribute toward school operations and maintenance.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF VALDEZ ALASKA, that

The City Council of the City of Valdez, Alaska supports Senate Concurrent Resolution 12 insofar as it recommends borough formation for the Upper Tanana Basin, Copper River Basin, Glacier Bay and Chatham Region Model Boroughs for the purpose of area contributions toward school operations and maintenance.

Resolution 03-90

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PASSED AND APPROVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF
VALDEZ, ALASKA this 6th day of October, 2003.

CITY OF VALDEZ, ALASKA


Bert L. Cottle, Mayor

ATTEST:


Sheri L. Pierce, CMC, City Clerk

